

# Fox in Kent County Tests Positive for Rabies

**DOVER** – Delaware's Division of Public Health (DPH) is advising Kent County residents who live in the area of Still Road between Pony Track and Mahan Corner roads near Sandtown of a positive case of rabies in a fox that came into contact with a human recently. The fox attacked a chicken on the victim's property and then bit the individual's leg. The individual has begun treatment for rabies exposure.

Anyone in this area who thinks they might have been bitten, scratched or come in contact with a fox should immediately contact their health care provider or call the DPH Rabies Program at 302-744-4995. An epidemiologist is available 24/7. Anyone who thinks their pet may have been bitten by this fox should call their private veterinarian or the Delaware Department of Agriculture (DDA) at 302-698-4630 or email [rabies.hotline@delaware.gov](mailto:rabies.hotline@delaware.gov).

Since Jan. 1, 2018, the Division of Public Health (DPH) has performed rabies tests on 118 animals, 12 of which were confirmed to be rabid, including four foxes (including this one), three raccoons, two cats, one dog, one horse, and one donkey. Rabies tests performed on five animals (one sheep, two bats and two dogs) were indeterminate. DPH only announces those rabies cases for which it is possible the animal had unknown contacts with additional humans or pets.

In addition, DPH recently announced Delaware's first positive case of rabies in a human in nearly 80 years. A Felton woman died in August after contracting the disease.

Rabies is an infectious disease affecting the nervous system of humans and other mammals. Infection can occur through the bite or scratch of an infected animal or if saliva from such

an animal gets into the eyes, nose, mouth or an opening in the skin. Rabies in humans and animals cannot be cured once symptoms appear, and therefore, if an animal that has exposed a human is unavailable to be quarantined or tested, DPH recommends that people receive post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) treatment, a series of four vaccinations, as a precautionary measure.

Fortunately, rabies is also almost completely preventable. DPH recommends that members of the public take the following steps to stay clear of exposure:

- All dogs, cats, and ferrets 6 months of age and older are required by Delaware law to be vaccinated against rabies by a licensed veterinarian. Consider vaccinating livestock and horses as well. It is recommended to consult with your private veterinarian if you have any questions regarding whether your animal(s) should be vaccinated against rabies.
- Pet owners can reduce the possibility of pets being exposed to rabies by not letting them roam free.
- Spaying or neutering your pet may reduce the tendency to roam or fight and, thus, reduce the chance they will be exposed to rabies.
- Do not keep your pet's food or water outdoors; bowls can attract wild and stray animals.
- Keep your garbage securely covered.
- Do not touch or otherwise handle wild or unfamiliar animals, even if they appear friendly.

For more information on the DPH rabies program, visit <http://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/dpc/rabies.html> or call 1-866-972-9705 or 302-744-4995. For more information on rabies, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at <http://www.cdc.gov/rabies/>.

*A person who is deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind or speech-disabled can call the DPH phone number above by using TTY services. Dial 7-1-1 or 800-232-5460 to type your conversation to a relay operator, who reads your conversation to a hearing*

person at DPH. The relay operator types the hearing person's spoken words back to the TTY user. To learn more about TTY availability in Delaware, visit <http://delawarerelay.com>.

Delaware Health and Social Services is committed to improving the quality of the lives of Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations. DPH, a division of DHSS, urges Delawareans to make healthier choices with the 5-2-1 Almost None campaign: eat 5 or more fruits and vegetables each day, have no more than 2 hours of recreational screen time each day (includes TV, computer, gaming), get 1 or more hours of physical activity each day, and drink almost no sugary beverages.